

Australia Highlights “Banjo’s” Bush Ballads



On May 13 Australia Post commemorated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Australian literary great, Andrew Barton “Banjo” Paterson, through a new stamp release acknowledging his iconic bush-themed ballads.

A rhyming, narrative-based poem adapted for singing, the bush ballad is a unique thread of Australia’s early literary and popular culture.

Australia Post Philatelic Manager Michael Zsolt said the new Bush Ballads domestic, base-rate (70¢) stamp release, featuring four of Banjo’s best-loved ballads, was a nod to Australia’s idyllic past: “The Australian bush ballad helped create a mythology of Australia and Australian identity during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and are generally simple stories of swagmen, bushrangers, drovers, shearers, working-class oppression and rural isolation.”

Banjo Paterson is also one of Australia’s best known folk poets, and popular renditions of his works—such as the film of “The Man from Snowy River” and the use of “Waltzing Matilda” as an unofficial national anthem—have helped carry his ballads across time.

The Bush Ballads stamp release, illustrated by Sydney-based illustrators Jamie and Leanne Tufrey, feature, left to right, the following Banjo Paterson poetry works:

- Clancy of the Overflow—This well-known poem, published in December 1889, demonstrates Paterson’s romanticism for bush life.
- The Man from Snowy River—Published in April 1890, this well-known tale tells of the pursuit of a prizewinning colt that escaped to run among a herd of brumbies in mountainous country.
- Waltzing Matilda—Written in 1895 to a tune played by Christina Macpherson, this is probably the most famous of all Australian ballads.
- Mulga Bill’s Bicycle—Published in July 1896, this humorous poem was written at the height of the late-19th-century bicycling craze.

The Bush Ballads stamp release includes a miniature sheet, first day cover, stamp pack, maxicard set of four, booklet of 10 x 70¢ self-adhesive stamps, roll of 100 x 70¢ self-adhesive stamps, gutter strip of 10 x 70¢ stamps with design, prestige booklet, postal and numismatic cover and a medallion cover.

The Bush Ballads stamp is available at www.auspost.com.au/stamps or contact Australia Stamp Agency in North America toll free (USA and Canada) at 1-800-443-4225 while stocks last.

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